



## TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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### MEDIA ADVISORY

## Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

Groundbreaking Alamo exhibit opens Feb. 21

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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(AUSTIN, Texas) —

Due largely to popular culture from a bygone era, the Battle of the Alamo is often depicted as a racial conflict between Anglos and Hispanics. But, of course, the truth is more revealing.

This spring the story of the Alamo siege and battle is cast in a new light. For the first time, visitors can examine the role of Tejanos in defending the Alamo and helping to forge not only a nation but a unique cultural identity.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo will bring the story of the Alamo's Tejano defenders to life. Visitors will stand in the Shrine of Texas Liberty and hear the words of several Tejanos and Tejanas who were eyewitnesses to history. Inside the sacristy, visitors will learn how the Tejano women and children huddled in the protection of its thick walls to survive the siege.

"The whole idea here is to tell a vital part of the story that's been lost over all these years," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "This wasn't a battle between Texans and Mexicans – this was a battle for liberty. They were fighting for liberty."

Members of the media will be granted guided access to the Shrine for a sneak peak at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20. Don't miss this rare opportunity to shoot both still and video photography inside the Shrine.

Tejanos is the third in a series of exhibits at the Shrine brought to you by the Alamo and the Texas General Land Office. The exhibit is ambitious, seeking to not only honor the Tejano Alamo defenders, but to portray them as real people using details from their own writings, rare and historic documents and personal mementos. Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo will open February 21 and will run through Friday, June 6. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

A highlight of the exhibit will be an interactive display that allows visitors to hear the words of many of the Tejanos that once echoed throughout the Alamo church. Visitors will hear descriptions of the bloodshed and accounts of the heroic activities of the Texans and Tejanos who were there, and the heartbreaking realization of an army, and community, after a battle lost, all while viewing historical portraits and other images.

Grammy-award winning Tejano superstar Ruben “El Gato Negro” Ramos is among the voice talent used for the recordings.

Patterson, the state’s steward of the Alamo, has long been an advocate for expanding the study of Texas history to include Native Americans and Tejanos, or Texans of Hispanic heritage. This exhibit is the second of two that highlight the Hispanic contribution to Texas and the Alamo.

“With immigration on the forefront of public discussion, it’s important to remember that Texas began as a part of the Spanish Empire ruled from Mexico,” Patterson said. “This is the whole story of the Alamo. While John Wayne made a movie about the Alamo, that largely focused on the Anglo defenders Crockett, Bowie and Travis, it’s important to remember the Tejano defenders who sacrificed their lives for Texas freedom, too.”

There were eight Tejano defenders of the Alamo who also gave their lives in the battle. They were Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Jose Maria Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Damacio Jimenez, Jose Toribio Losoya, and Andres Nava. There were also Tejano combatants who survived, or were sent out before the final attack on March 6. Those featured in this exhibit are Andres Barcenas, Anselmo Bergara, Antonio Cruz y Arocha, Alexandro de la Garza, Brigido Guerrero, and Juan Seguin.

There were also many Tejanas, or Tejano women, many of whom sought refuge within the sacristy of the Alamo church. Those women were Gertrudis Navarro, Juana Navarro Perez Alsbury, Ana Salazar Castro de Esparza, Petra Gonzales, Mariá Franciscá Curvier Losoya Juana Francisca Losoya Melton, Victoriana de Salinas, Trinidad Saucedo, and Andrea Castanon Villanueva, better known as Madam Candelaria. With the women were nine children: Enrique Esparza, Manuel Esparza, Francisco Esparza, Maria de Jesus Castro Esparza, Juan Losoya, Alejo Perez, Jr., and three daughters of Victoriana de Salinas.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo will feature over 30 original documents, maps, and cultural artifacts, telling the story of the Tejano defenders during the Battle of the Alamo.

The items that will be displayed inside the Shrine were pulled from the archival collections of the General Land Office, the Alamo, the Alamo Research Center and the Briscoe Center for American History and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The fragile maps, documents and cultural artifacts provide fascinating and personal insights on the Tejano men, women and children who gave their lives, or witnessed the mythic birth of Texas.

Documents from the Land Office Archives and Records will also put to rest a long-standing historical error of fact in regard to one Tejana in particular. Mariá Franciscá Curvier Losoya, long misidentified in various publications for more than a century, will at long last come forth from the historical shadows to finally receive full and accurate public recognition for her role as a survivor and widow of the Battle of the Alamo. This was made possible by the discovery of primary source evidence; an 1861 affidavit filed as part of a land grant application in the Land Office Archives and Records.

Dr. Bruce Winders, Chief Historian at the Alamo, noted that such a discovery "shows that there is so much out there waiting to be found and incorporated into the historical narrative," of the Alamo, and that the scholarship upon which this exhibit has been built "represents a maturing of the field of Alamo research."

The exhibit opens to the public on Friday, February 21, and will run through the “high holy days” at the Alamo, commemorating the 13-day siege that started on February 23,

and ended with every Alamo defender being killed by Mexican General Santa Anna's army on March 6. The exhibit closes on June 6, commemorating Juan Seguin and his fellow Tejano troops taking back possession of San Antonio from the Mexican army.

Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo will be open to the public seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from February 21 to June 6. As always, the "Shrine of Texas Liberty" is open to visitors free of charge. Visitors are asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the documents and no photography will be allowed.

For more information on the Alamo, please visit the Official Alamo website at [www.thealamo.org](http://www.thealamo.org).

Who: Lovers of Texas history

What: Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo

When: February 21 through June 6, 2014

Where: The Alamo, 300 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, Texas 78205

Why: To examine the Tejano contributions to the Alamo and Texas history.

BONUS! View three stories highlighted in the exhibit, Standing Their Ground: Tejanos at the Alamo now here: <http://www.youtube.com/OfficialAlamo>

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